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Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 29 June 2016

[*on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2016/L.20)*]

2016/9. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming also the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the need for all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies, protracted crises and natural disasters to promote and fully respect those principles,

Recalling its decision 2016/219 of 6 May 2016, in which it decided that the theme for the humanitarian affairs segment of its 2016 session would be "Restoring humanity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability" and that it would convene three panel discussions under the segment,

Expressing deep concern at the increasing challenges to Member States, the United Nations and their capacity caused by the impact of climate change, the ongoing consequences of the financial and economic crisis, regional food crises, continuing food and energy insecurity, water scarcity, epidemics, natural hazards and environmental degradation, which are adding to underdevelopment, poverty and inequality and are increasing the vulnerability of people while reducing their ability to cope with humanitarian crises, emphasizing the need for resources for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and humanitarian assistance, including in developing countries, to be provided efficiently and effectively, and emphasizing also the need for development and humanitarian actors to work better together to strengthen resilience, including urban resilience, in terms of prevention, preparedness and response,

Expressing grave concern at the unprecedented number of people affected and displaced by humanitarian emergencies, including frequently protracted displacement resulting from humanitarian emergencies, which are increasing in number, scale and severity and are stretching humanitarian response capacities, recognizing the need

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for burden-sharing, and noting with appreciation efforts at the national and international levels that promote national capacity-building to address complex challenges in this regard,

Recognizing the critical role of host countries and communities, especially developing countries, in addressing the needs of affected populations in humanitarian emergencies, and reiterating the need for timely and coordinated support from the international community to hosts and affected countries to strengthen their development and resilience,

Recalling the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[1] and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977[2] and the obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances, and the obligation of all parties to armed conflict to comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law,

Recalling also the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977 and 2005,[3] as applicable, as well as relevant customary international law concerned with the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and the obligation of parties to armed conflict to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances, and noting the applicable rules of international humanitarian law relating to the non-punishment of any person for carrying out medical activities compatible with medical ethics,

Strongly condemning acts of violence, attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport, equipment and supplies, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and deploring the long-term consequences of such attacks for the civilian population and the health-care systems of the countries concerned,

Condemning all attacks, threats and other acts of violence against humanitarian personnel, their facilities, equipment, transports and supplies, and expressing deep concern about the consequences of such attacks for the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations,

Recognizing that humanitarian emergencies may disproportionately affect women and girls and that it is essential to ensure that women are empowered to effectively and meaningfully participate in leadership and decision-making processes relevant to such emergencies, that women's and girls' specific needs and interests are identified and adequately addressed, in strategies and responses, as appropriate, and that the rights of women and girls are promoted and protected in humanitarian emergencies,

Emphasizing the urgent need for increased financing and more efficient delivery of quality education in humanitarian emergencies, as a contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to provide quality education for all, in particular children, in humanitarian emergencies,

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.

[3] Ibid., vol. 2404, No. 43425.

Noting with great concern that violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and violence against children, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in emergency situations and that civilians are the main victims of violations of international humanitarian law committed by parties to armed conflict,

Emphasizing that building and strengthening resilience at the local, national and regional levels is critical to reducing the impact of disasters and vulnerabilities to hazards, and in this regard, while recognizing that building resilience is a multidimensional process, in support of long-term development, including both humanitarian and development actors, stressing the need for enhanced investment in building national and local capacities for preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response, particularly in developing countries, as well as investment in building regional capacities,

Recognizing the clear relationship between emergency response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, and reaffirming that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, emergency assistance will be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development and that emergency measures should be accompanied by development measures as a step towards the sustainable development of affected States, and in this regard highlighting the importance of closer cooperation between national stakeholders, including the private sector, as appropriate, and humanitarian and development actors,

Reaffirming that the specific needs and priorities, as well as capacities of women, girls, men and boys of different ages should be identified, responded to and mainstreamed into humanitarian assistance programming at all stages in a comprehensive and consistent manner, recognizing that in humanitarian emergencies, women, girls and boys face heightened risks to their safety, health and well-being,

Recognizing that, in humanitarian emergencies, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected and face multiple obstacles in accessing humanitarian assistance, recognizing also the need to make humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities, and in this regard stressing the importance of ensuring non-discrimination and participation, as well as cooperation and coordination in the provision of assistance,

Recognizing also that Member States and the United Nations system need to continue their work through, inter alia, strengthening partnerships at all levels with relevant stakeholders, including regional organizations, civil society and the private sector, as appropriate, in support of national efforts, while ensuring that their collaborative efforts adhere to humanitarian principles,

Stressing the need for Member States, the United Nations and relevant stakeholders to work together to reduce the specific needs of the most vulnerable, thereby contributing to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[4] including the call to leave no one behind,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[5]

2. *Encourages* United Nations humanitarian organizations and other relevant organizations, while strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, to continue to work in close coordination with national

[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[5] A/71/82-E/2016/60.

Governments, taking into account the primary role of the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of such assistance within its territory;

3. *Encourages* the United Nations to continue to strengthen coordination, preparedness and response efforts and to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action, including through enhancing complementarity with and between relevant stakeholders, such as affected Governments, regional organizations, donors, development organizations, civil society and the private sector, involved in response efforts to make use of their comparative advantages and resources;

4. *Stresses* that the United Nations system should continue to enhance existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including, as appropriate, through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries, encourages the international community, the relevant entities of the United Nations system and other relevant institutions and organizations to support national authorities in their capacity-building programmes, including through technical cooperation and long-term partnerships, as well as by strengthening their capacity to build resilience, mitigate disaster risks and prepare for and respond to disasters, and encourages Member States to create and strengthen an enabling environment for the capacity-building of their national and local authorities, national societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in providing timely humanitarian assistance;

5. *Encourages* humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors, as appropriate, in consultation with Governments, to consider, where possible, common risk-management and resilience objectives, achievable through coordinated and complementary assessments, analysis, planning, programming and funding and increased investment in preparedness, based on a prioritization of needs and conducted in line with humanitarian principles, in order to reduce suffering and losses and the overall impact of humanitarian crises, and in this regard emphasizes that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to longer-term development, humanitarian response, particularly in protracted crises, needs to be planned over a multi-year framework, as appropriate, and linked with development planning processes, while integrating key stakeholders, such as Governments, regional organizations and international financial institutions, as appropriate;

6. *Encourages* humanitarian and development organizations to consider applying, in coordination with national authorities, risk-management tools in order to allow for better use of baseline information and risk analysis, including analysis of the underlying causes of crises, the different vulnerabilities of countries and regions and the risk exposures of affected populations, and in this regard notes the further development of established tools, such as the Index for Risk Management, to include more data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and information regarding national and regional contexts, taking into account the environmental impact;

7. *Urges* United Nations agencies and international organizations, in their humanitarian assistance efforts, to continue to improve the humanitarian programme cycle, including the development of coordinated needs assessment tools, such as multisector initial rapid assessments, the implementation of joint, impartial and timely needs assessments, and prioritized needs-based humanitarian response plans,

in consultation with affected States, and in order to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian action encourages international humanitarian organizations and relevant actors to continue to work with national and local authorities as well as with civil society and affected populations, and recognizes the role of affected communities in identifying urgent needs and requirements in order to ensure an efficient response;

8. *Stresses* the need to increase support for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030[6] through, inter alia, disaster risk-informed policies, programmes and investments and other proactive measures that aim to prevent new and reduce existing risk, in order to minimize humanitarian needs;

9. *Encourages* Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations, in accordance with their specific mandates, to continue to support adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change and to strengthen disaster risk reduction and early warning systems in order to minimize the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing adverse impact of climate change, especially for those countries that are particularly vulnerable, thereby also contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals;

10. *Recognizes* the need to strengthen international cooperation to prevent, reduce and address sustainably vulnerabilities related to climate change and natural disasters, particularly with least developed countries and small island developing States and their communities;

11. *Urges* the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to further strengthen their efforts in supporting national Governments in mapping emergency preparedness and response capacities at the country and regional levels, in order to better facilitate the complementarity of disaster response efforts between national and international capacities, and in this regard encourages Member States to promote, as appropriate, the implementation of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance and to integrate risk management into national development plans;

12. *Requests* Member States, relevant organizations and other relevant actors to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in all stages of humanitarian response through addressing the specific needs, challenges and coping capacities of women, girls, men and boys on an equal basis, taking into consideration age and disability, including through the improved collection, analysis, reporting and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and taking into account information provided by affected States, and to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making processes in order to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian action, and encourages greater use of the gender marker and other monitoring tools throughout the humanitarian programme cycle;

13. *Encourages* Member States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations humanitarian organizations, to promote women's leadership and their participation in the planning and implementation of response strategies, including through strengthening partnerships with and building capacities of national and local institutions, including national and local women's organizations and civil society actors, as appropriate;

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[6] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

14. *Urges* Member States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations and other humanitarian organizations, to ensure reliable and safe access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as well as basic health-care services, in order to protect women and adolescent girls and infants from preventable mortality and morbidity that occur in humanitarian emergencies;

15. *Urges* Member States to continue to prevent, investigate and, as appropriate, prosecute acts of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, and calls upon Member States and relevant organizations to strengthen their response, including support services for victims, survivors and those affected by such violence, calls for a more effective response, and in this regard urges all relevant stakeholders to consider engaging in this area;

16. *Underscores* that it is critically important for civilians, in particular women and children, to be protected from any form of abuse or exploitation, and welcomes the determination of the Secretary-General to fully implement the United Nations policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse;

17. *Recognizes* that humanitarian emergencies weaken the ability of social services, including health systems, to deliver essential life-saving assistance, and produce setbacks in health development, and stresses the need to build resilient health systems at the national, regional and global levels, especially capacity-building, in particular for developing countries, and in this regard calls upon the World Health Organization, the United Nations humanitarian system, other humanitarian organizations and other relevant actors to strengthen their cooperation and coordination and response capacities so as to assist Member States, upon request, in effectively responding to outbreaks and emergencies with health consequences in humanitarian settings;

18. *Encourages* Member States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations humanitarian organizations, to ensure that the basic humanitarian needs of affected populations, including clean water, food, shelter, energy, health, including sexual and reproductive health, education and protection, are addressed as components of humanitarian response, including through providing timely and adequate resources, while ensuring that their collaborative efforts fully adhere to humanitarian principles;

19. *Encourages* Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to work together to understand and address the different protection needs of affected populations, particularly the most vulnerable, in humanitarian crises and ensure that these needs are adequately integrated into preparedness, response and recovery efforts;

20. *Urges* Member States to continue to take the steps necessary to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, as well as medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their facilities, equipment, transports and supplies, requests the Secretary-General to expedite his efforts to enhance the safety and security of personnel involved in United Nations humanitarian operations, and in this regard reaffirms the need for States to ensure that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law do not operate with impunity and that they are brought to justice, as provided for by national laws and obligations under international law;

21. *Reaffirms* the right to education for all and the importance of ensuring safe enabling learning environments in humanitarian emergencies, as well as quality education at all levels, including for girls, including technical and vocational training opportunities, where possible, inter alia, through adequate funding and

infrastructural investments, for the well-being of all, to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development, and in this regard reiterates the need to protect and respect educational facilities in accordance with international humanitarian law and strongly condemns all attacks directed against schools in contravention of international humanitarian law;

22. *Requests* Member States to strengthen their efforts to ensure better protection of and assistance for as well as the self-reliance of internally displaced persons, including through appropriate cooperation with the private sector and international financial institutions, in particular to address the long-term nature of displacement, by adopting and implementing policies and strategies, on a multi-year basis as applicable, in accordance with national and regional frameworks, while recognizing the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement [7] as an important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons, and in this regard recognizes the central role of national and local authorities and institutions in addressing the specific needs of internally displaced persons and in finding solutions to displacement through, inter alia, continued and enhanced international support, upon request, for the capacity-building of States;

23. *Recognizes* the increase in the number and scale of disasters, including those related to the adverse effects of climate change, which in certain instances may contribute to displacement, and additional pressure on host communities, and encourages the United Nations and all relevant actors to strengthen the efforts aimed at addressing the needs of persons displaced within the context of disasters, including those induced by climate change;

24. *Also recognizes* the significant increase in forced displacement worldwide, and stresses the need to comprehensively respond to the specific needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities in humanitarian and development planning;

25. *Calls upon* Member States, relevant organizations and actors to recognize and address the consequences of humanitarian emergencies for migrants and to strengthen coordinated international efforts for their assistance and protection in concert with national authorities;

26. *Recognizes* the importance of early registration and effective registration systems and censuses as a tool of protection and as a means of carrying out the quantification and assessment of needs for the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance, and notes the many and diverse challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers who remain without any form of documentation attesting to their status;

27. *Requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to lead the efforts to strengthen the coordination, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian assistance through, inter alia, continued and enhanced dialogue with Member States, including on the processes, activities and decisions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and further strengthening, within existing resources and mandates, the coordination abilities of the humanitarian coordinator, and in this regard encourages Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and other intergovernmental organizations and relevant stakeholders to continue to improve cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat so as to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the humanitarian response to affected people;

[7] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

28. *Recognizes* that accountability is an integral part of effective humanitarian assistance, and emphasizes the need to enhance the accountability of humanitarian actors at all stages of humanitarian assistance;

29. *Calls upon* the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to enhance accountability to Member States, including affected States, and all other stakeholders, including local governments and relevant local organizations, as well as affected populations, and to further strengthen humanitarian response efforts, including by monitoring and evaluating the provision of their humanitarian assistance, incorporating lessons learned into programming and consulting with the affected populations to ensure that their needs are appropriately addressed;

30. *Encourages* Member States, the United Nations system and humanitarian and development organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, to continue to support Member States, in particular developing countries, in promoting innovation as a means of developing tools that enhance preparedness and reduce fragility and risks through, inter alia, increasing investment in research and development leading to innovation and access to information and communications technologies, and to identify, promote and integrate best practices and lessons learned with regard to, inter alia, partnerships, procurement, collaboration and coordination between agencies and organizations, and in this regard notes the importance of promoting and supporting innovation and developing local capacities as a priority and welcomes innovative practices that draw on the knowledge of people affected by humanitarian emergencies to develop locally sustainable solutions and to produce life-saving items locally, with minimum logistical and infrastructure implications;

31. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect, and all States to ensure respect for, international humanitarian law, as well as to comply with their obligations under human rights law and refugee law, as applicable;

32. *Calls upon* all States and parties to comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law, including all of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,[1] in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,[8] in order to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories, and in this regard urges the international community and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen humanitarian assistance to civilians in those situations;

33. *Urges* all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance to fully commit to and duly respect the guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, including the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as well as the principle of independence, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 58/114 of 17 December 2003;

34. *Calls upon* all States and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment in order to allow humanitarian personnel to perform efficiently their task of assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

35. *Requests* the United Nations to continue to identify solutions to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy appropriately senior, skilled and experienced humanitarian staff quickly and flexibly, giving paramount consideration to the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while paying due regard to gender equality for recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to address further the insufficient diversity in geographical representation and gender balance in the composition of humanitarian staff of the United Nations, in particular regarding professional and high-level staff;

36. *Urges* efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination of United Nations humanitarian entities, other relevant humanitarian organizations and donor countries with the affected States, recognizes that humanitarian assistance should be provided in ways that are supportive of early recovery, sustainable rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development, and recalls that early recovery requires timely, effective and predictable funding through humanitarian and development financing, as appropriate, to meet enduring humanitarian, recovery and post-crisis priorities while simultaneously building national and local capacities;

37. *Encourages* the United Nations and relevant humanitarian organizations, in cooperation and coordination with Member States, respecting their national priorities, and consistent with humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, to support and build national and local capacities, including through increasing predictable and, as appropriate, direct financing to national and local partners, including women's groups, with a focus on preparedness, response, recovery and coordination capacities, and encourages Member States to continue to provide funding to humanitarian country-based pooled funds;

38. *Recognizes* that funding needs to be more flexible to allow for a complementary approach in order to effectively and sufficiently address the immediate needs of all affected populations in emergency situations, including for underfunded and forgotten emergencies and those of a long-term nature, and the underlying causes of crises, and encourages Member States, the United Nations system, the private sector and other relevant entities to provide adequate funding and investment in preparedness and resilience-building, including from humanitarian and development budgets, reduce earmarking and increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding, as appropriate, while recognizing the need for transparency in how core and non-earmarked funding is used;

39. *Stresses* the need to enhance resource mobilization efforts to address the increasing capacity and resource gap, including through additional contributions from non-traditional donors, exploring innovative mechanisms, such as the utilization of risk-informed anticipatory decision-making, flexible funding for multi-year appeals through existing tools such as consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds, such as the country-based pooled funds, and to continue to broaden partnerships and the donor base in order to increase the predictability and effectiveness of funding, and to promote South-South and horizontal and triangular cooperation globally, and in this regard encourages, as appropriate, Member States to contribute to the humanitarian appeals brought forward by the United Nations;

40. *Welcomes* the important achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund in ensuring a more timely and predictable response to humanitarian emergencies, and therefore welcomes the call by the Secretary-General to double the Fund to 1 billion United States dollars by 2018, and in this regard encourages Member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to support the Fund, and emphasizes the need to broaden and diversify the income base of the Fund;

41. *Notes* the holding of the first World Humanitarian Summit, in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016;

42. *Encourages* Member States to work closely with the United Nations and other relevant actors, including the private sector and local entities, as appropriate, to promote more effective emergency preparedness and response in urban areas, and in this regard looks forward to the upcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016;

43. *Recognizes* the importance of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, to be held on 19 September 2016;

44. *Requests* the Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution in his next report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations;

45. *Requests* the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to continue their efforts with a view to eliminating duplication between the resolutions of the Council and the Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, while promoting their complementarity.

34th plenary meeting
29 June 2016